

About Kriya Yoga and Acharya Satyananda – an initiate’s perspective

by Marina Kapur

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Time to time, we ask ourselves, why am I here, what is the best thing for me, how can I be happy, healthy, successful, be at peace, be a better person and still fulfil my responsibilities to myself, my family, my work and the world?

As I support business leaders, their companies and their families, to navigate through business, society and life in a manner that reflects their passion, purpose and priorities, this is a question that is often raised. My response is, “start with your truth.” To live in truth needs an understanding of Who I Am. The starting point is self realization and self awareness, on which conscious creation is built with mindfulness and self mastery. When I know myself, I can lead myself, I can make a difference. I have been practicing hatha yoga since 1995. In reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* many years ago, I recognized Mahavatar Kriya Babaji and wanted to experience the original ancient Kriya Yoga. This dream (like so many others) came true - I completed my initiation into Babaji’s Kriya Yoga in 2011 with Yogacharya Satyananda.

What a Gift! Kriya Yoga wrapped up all my learning of *Raja Yoga* with *Brahma Kumaris*, *Sudarshan Kriya* and *Padmasadhana* with *Art of Living*, *Isha Yoga* with the *Isha Foundation*, training in *Power to Create* with *Landmark Education* and *Self Management Leadership* with *Oxford Leadership Academy*, as well as Kundalini Yoga and Tibetan Yoga practices, which are effective in their own right, yet Kriya Yoga is powerful beyond words. Receiving the first initiation inspired me to continue with the second initiation seminar, and I now look forward to the advanced third initiation - to continue deeper into the journey, to meet Myself and my Creator.

Like other volunteers, I help organize Initiation programs and have participated in programs in Singapore, Mumbai, Delhi, Munich and London. Each time the experience has been beautiful and different. Now I understand why it has not been written about in detail – because “*words do not capture its magic*”.

Many Kriya initiates experienced and describe “*deep healing*” and *cleansing* physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Love and faith and mindful action with awareness replace fear, greed and unconscious automatic response of behavior. We get the confidence, power and courage to make brave decisions, supported by a heightened level of awareness, vital energy, inspiration and inner guidance, creativity, belongingness and a new sense of well-being, which makes us feel safe and secure that no matter what “*all is well*”.

Was there any conflict between Kriya Yoga and other spiritual practices? No, if anything. Babaji’s Kriya Yoga is a holistic, integral approach, without compelling to any religious denomination, a “scientific art” and a purely spiritual practice, which discloses the secret ancient teaching of the Yoga Siddhas to us in modern daily life, and combines sacred rituals of body postures (hatha yoga), conscious breathing (pranayama), meditation (dhyana), chanting mantras (bhakti yoga), silence (mauna), realization of truth (jnana yoga), and realization of Self (samadhi).

Was there a conflict between Gurus? No, not at all! Actually, I feel that my earlier Gurus brought me to Mahavatar Kriya Babaji, and Babaji is preparing me to align with the Creator. No one is asked to withdraw from a personal Guru or a tradition one is committed to, there is no requirement to take Kriya Babaji as “one’s only” Guru. Rather, we are taught and guided to identify, realize and become one with Guru within us.

Was there a conflict between any fitness requirements and my state of health? No, not at all, everyone does as much as is individually possible for them at each moment.

Like my co-participants, I am fortunate to have had Yogacharya Satyananda as my physical guide at one moment of time during my journey Home. However, when I first saw him, I saw a youthful yet ordinary-European looking man, without features one would “expect” to see when meeting a spiritual teacher of a traditional guru lineage from India -

no long white beard, no orange robe, no garland, just in traditional acharya clothing, and definitely with no “guru attitude”, and I questioned how effective his teaching would be. Yet, like others, I was pleasantly surprised that my apprehension was unjustified. On the contrary, many of us thought afterwards, “*we could not have asked for a better guide*”. We saw, how his diligent, precise and patient “*teaching is whole and complete*”, the way he “*blends his knowledge of ancient Indian traditions, other belief systems and modern Western metaphysical science, makes you realize that the Kriya Yoga path really is a Universal practice*”, not limited to a religion, a sect, an “ism”, nor that it is any fashionable fad. With a fresh, vivid clarity and simplicity, he brings together and illustrates concepts, methods of practice, background philosophy and yogic science, purpose and benefits, differences and similarities to other traditions, so that “*the holistic manner in which he integrates the What, How and Why removes doubts, and answers even unasked questions.*” Satyananda’s openness to generously share his wisdom with a “*genuinely sincere, humble and modest*” attitude, makes Kriya Yoga “*appealing, accessible and applicable*” to all; his “*innocent humor makes the journey lighter*”. And because of that lightness, it makes it possible for us to go deeper still. I believe, that is because he provides an authentic space for powerful inner experience – if we allow it, and because he is detached from the outcome - he realizes, each one of us will find our path to our personal truth at our speed and time, yet for sure, each one of us receives the gift of being touched in our heart, a glimpse of truth, a spark and a sense of hope.

The spiritual light awakens souls to their own inner beauty.

To me, Satyananda is a practical example and inspiration of how our spiritual light works through all of us. His presence, attitude and message are reflected in these quotes he frequently uses, “***Whatever contains fear cannot ever be Truth***”, and “***Nothing real can be threatened – Nothing unreal exists***”, have profoundly influenced my outlook on truth, reality, trust and inner peace. In organizing his programs, I have witnessed Satyananda’s attitude of compassion and gratitude. Whilst I got angry and upset about poor teaching conditions he has to tolerate outside Europe, he remained non-judgmental and accepting. Still, I wonder how we, the participants and volunteers, can reciprocate his devotion and commitment to us? If he can leave his privileged profession as a certified psychotherapist and psychologist to serve us, why can’t we be more aware and responsible in the way we ensure best teaching conditions for us? Babaji selects people to be our guides – these beings are gifts to humanity. Therefore, like my fellow volunteers, I am grateful of the opportunity to serve Babaji by assisting also Satyananda. As Karthik, in Singapore says, “*being a volunteer gives me immense satisfaction, and deepens my sadhana through karma yoga.*” This passion to serve is shared by, for example Adya, Ashish, Bala, Celia, Jayanth, Joy, Narayani, Narsimhan, Neel, Neschay, Sandeep, Sanjay, Subbiah, Sunil, Tarun, Vimala, Vinod, whom I personally know of, as well as other volunteers worldwide.

As I write this, I understand why Satyananda does not consider it important to write stories about himself and his life. He does not seek celebrity, guru or special status – ways to fall into ego games, although his knowledge, insight and wisdom are deep. His way of speaking illustrates he is aware that he serves as a channel and messenger for the highest teaching and The Great Teacher. His love of solitude and inner silence (in spite of having to constantly speak) reminds me of one of his favorite quotes from Kabir:

“I was looking for myself. And I found no self. I am no more. The dew drop is disappearing into the ocean.”

I realize that there is much more that we can learn. Yet I am reminded of Satyananda’s words, “*Don’t believe me, find it yourself to be true, experience it yourself.*” Thank you, Satyananda – we will! Marina.

(Quotes of other students set in italics)

M.D. Satyananda is member of Babaji’s Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas since 2005 and gives seminars with initiation into Babaji’s Kriya Yoga in various countries. Certified in Psychology and Psychotherapy, he has worked in clinical and corporation settings. After studying spiritual wisdom of the world since childhood and Vedanta and Yoga for more than a decade in India and the West, he dedicated several years exclusively to intense study and practice of Babaji’s Kriya Yoga and to serving Babaji’s Kriya Yoga and its students worldwide network with Karma Yoga. He has taken several pilgrimages to India’s holy places and saints.

During first quarter 2013, Satyananda will give initiation seminars again in various cities in India and in Sri Lanka.